Did You Know?

Employees have a chance to identify high-priority technology issues and tools needed to provide quality assistance to clients.

Ideas are requested to help deliver quality assistance in the following areas: technical tools that need to be developed or improved; technology obstacles that hinder the implementation of sound conservation assistance; technology problems or issues that need solutions; and other technology needs.

Send ideas to Jim Caudle by e-mail at jim.caudle@ar.usda.gov or fax to (501) 301-3189 by Sept. 28.

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A conservation tillage workshop, sponsored by Monsanto, is from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sept. 13 at the Riverfront Hilton in North Little Rock.

Subjects include no-till pasture and forage production.

For more information, contact Bobby Bradley at (501) 301-3164.

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Changes and corrections to the July 2001 directory must be e-mailed to updates@ar.usda.gov in order for the changes to take place on the web site and the new directory when it is published. Additional copies of the directory will be made available as soon as they are produced.

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Only emergency purchases are allowed until further notice. Emergency purchases must be approved by the appropriate management team member.

The Montgomery County Conservation District used the buffer display as their fair booth and won first place at the county fair. Other displays available through team leaders include: recruiting and A Health Community Needs a Healthy Environment.

Comings & Goings

James Ellis is the new biologist on the technical services staff at the state office. He transferred from the Corps of Engineers.

Charles Grose is the new soil conservation technician at the North Little Rock Field Service Center. He transferred from the Heber Springs FSA.

Wendy Hendrix is the new soil conservation technician at the Marshall FSC.

Derrek Nokes is the new soil conservation aide at the Searcy FSC.

David Sullivan is the new civil engineer at the Lonoke Irrigation Office.

Mark Van Lear is the new soil scientist on the soil survey staff at the state office. He transferred from Virginia.

Calendar of Events

September

Sept. 16-20 -- National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees Meeting, Fort Worth, Texas.

Sept. 18 -- West Central Area Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts Meeting, Fort Smith.

Sept. 19 -- Federal Employee's Association Meeting, Little Rock.

Sept. 19-20 -- Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission Meeting, Jonesboro.

Sept. 24 -- Management Team Meeting, Little Rock.

October

Oct. 4-5 -- Soil and Water Conservation Society Fall Meeting, Little Rock.

Oct. 12 -- Agroforestry Field Day, Fayetteville.

Oct. 16-17 -- Management Team Meeting, Little Rock.

ARKANSAS CONSERVATION NEWS

USDA NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Room 3416, Federal Bldg., 700 W. Capitol Ave., Little Rock, AR 72201 September 2001

A newly constructed irrigation storage reservoir in the Grand Prairie project area.

Project delivers water to Grand Prairie

Approximately 86 percent of the water needed for crop irrigation in east-central Arkansas, the Grand Prairie, is withdrawn from the Mississippi River Valley alluvial aquifer.

The Grand Prairie is one of the major rice and soybean producing areas in the United States. Loss of rice and soybean production in this area would result in severe economic and social repercussions to the local, state and national economies.

A main source of agricultural water since 1904, the alluvial aquifer annually provides millions of gallons of water but is quickly being depleted.

In 1937, water from the alluvial aquifer was typically 50 feet beneath the surface.

However, today the National Water Management Center reports water is typically 105 feet below the surface.

In some areas, drilling into the deeper Sparta aquifer, the area's only reliable source of drinking water, is necessary for adequate supplies of irrigation water.

"Without an adequate solution to the region's groundwater problems, studies predict the aquifer will be commercially useless by 2015," said Tony Stevenson, state conservation engineer.

The recommended plan combines on-farm conservation measures and irrigation storage reservoirs with an irrigation canal network to deliver surface water

See Grand Prairie, Page 3

Total Cost Accounting System goes on-line

Training on new web-based program begins for all employees

The way employees enter their time and attendance into the Total Cost Accounting System is about to change.

Arkansas is one of the first states to begin entering the data on-line.

"The new system starts with this pay period; however, since everyone hasn't been trained time keepers will enter everyone's time," said Tanya Jacks, Arkansas TCAS coordinator. "Employees will begin entering their own time during pay period 18."

"Employees should check their CAMS ID and password before pay period 18 begins."

-- *Tanya Jacks*
TCAS coordinator

Timekeepers received training Aug. 21 and the management team and those who will be providing training to field office employees attended a session Aug. 29.

Training for all employees should be completed by Sept. 14. "The assistants for field operations are responsible for scheduling and providing training to the employees within their area," said Doris Washington, assistant state conservationist for strategic planning.

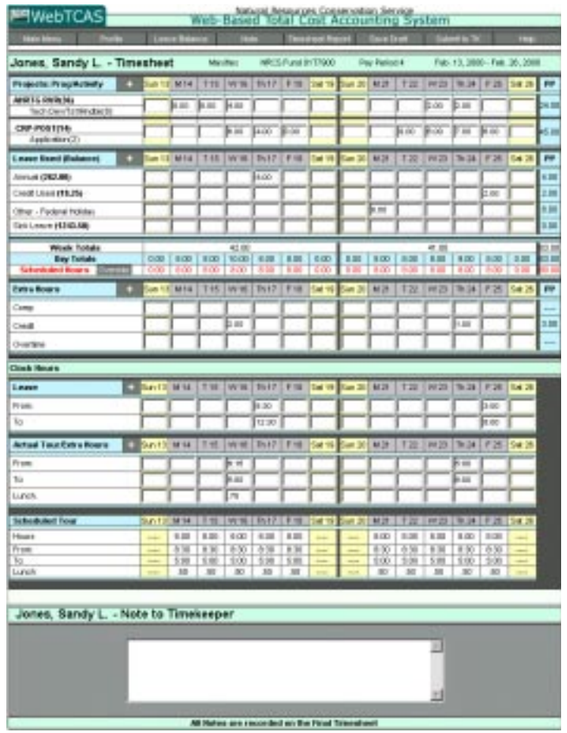
State office and Lonoke Irrigation Office employees receive training Sept. 11 and 12. Management team members will designate staff to attend one of the sessions.

The Web TCAS Deployment Team has established a preview site at http://calais.itc.nrcs.usda.gov/IAS_TEST/webtcas/.

"I encourage employees to browse through the employee preview screens and supervisors the supervisor preview screens," Jacks said. "The site must be accessed through Microsoft Internet Explorer v.5. Netscape Navigator will not work."

Once the training is completed, employees will enter their time at www.nrcs.usda.gov/webtcas. To log on, employees use their CAMS log in and password. Instructions for using the site are also available on line on the home page.

"Employees should check their CAMS ID and password at http://cams.usda.gov before pay period 18 begins," Jacks said. "If needed, human resources can reset the CAMS password.



The Web TCAS timesheet is designed with everything on one page.

"After the conversion, employees will continue to submit reimbursable sheets to their timekeeper. The reimbursable sheets are very important. They allow program managers and financial management staff to correctly track hours spent working on these projects," Jacks said.

"However, clock hour sheets will no longer be required," she said. "Web TCAS allows employees to directly enter changes in their tour of duty, extra hours worked and leave taken."

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Grand Prairie

(Continued from Page 1)

throughout the area.

"The project will preserve the alluvial and Sparta aquifers by providing supplemental irrigation water to approximately 240,000 acres of cropland," Stevenson said. "Additionally, 38,000 acres of cropland will be seasonally flooded to provide fall and winter feeding and nesting areas for waterfowl."

The delivery system will consist of new canals, existing streams and new pipelines. Water will be pumped from the White River into the delivery system and transported to individual farms.

On-farm conservation practices will consist of storage reservoirs, pipelines, water control structures and tailwater recovery systems.

On-farm water storage reservoirs will be constructed on individual farms, will generally be enclosed by levees, and will be filled by pumping.

The reservoirs will be filled during late winter and early spring from natural run-off captured through the tailwater recovery systems or from the delivery system when natural run-off is inadequate.

During the cropping season, water will be supplied to the crops from natural run-off captured by tailwater recovery systems, the delivery system, reservoirs and wells.

The Grand Prairie Project area covers parts of Arkansas, Lonoke, Monroe and Prairie counties. The project area is approximately 50 miles in length and averages approximately 15 miles wide with Stuttgart located near its the center.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding for implementation of on-farm measures has been estimated at $25 million for FY 01, and $55 million for the next three to five years. Seventeen NRCS employees are planning, surveying, designing and overseeing construction of the on-farm practices.

Tailwater recovery systems capture runoff and tailwater for future use.

Bob Fooks, water management engineer, inspects a flow meter on a pumping plant.

The Corps of Engineers will fund approximately $1.5 million in NRCS technical assistance in FY 01 and an additional $8.5 million in the next three to five years.

"There have been 216 contracts signed with a federal cost share of more than $20 million and a total construction cost of more than $30 million.

Practices planned with contracts signed include 109 new reservoirs totaling 2,365 surface acres; 43 rebuilt reservoirs totaling 3,520 surface acres; 167 tailwater pits totaling 2,161 acre feet of storage; 321 relift pumps and 176.8 miles of irrigation pipeline.

The contracts include more than 16,000 acres of cropland with water control structures for waterfowl flooding.

Workers install irrigation pipelines to improve on-farm irrigation efficiencies and conserve water.